

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2897

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 7679

FOR UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: USIRJC

SUBJECT: US-IRAN JOINT COMMISSION

1. AS YOU MAY KNOW, IN SPITE OF A NUMBER OF EFFORTS WE HAVE MADE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND WITH VARIOUS MINISTRIES, WE HAVE ACHIEVED LITTLE CONCRETE SUCCESS IN MOVING TECHNICAL COOPERATION EFFORTS FORWARD. THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED IN WASHINGTON BY ANSARY AND THE SECRETARY HAS YET TO BE FORWARDED TO THE MAJLIS FOR RATIFICATION. WE UNDERSTAND INFORMALLY THAT THERE ARE RESERVATIONS WITHIN THE GOI ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATION OF THIS AGREEMENT VIS-A-VIS SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS IRAN HAS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WHO ARE PROVIDING TECHNICAL EXPERTS. EVEN IF THESE DIFFERENCES ARE IRONED OUT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE CAN EXPECT THE NEW MAJLIS, WHICH WILL CONVENE IN SEPTEMBER, TO HAVE RATIFICATION OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT AT THE TOP OF ITS LIST OF LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES. OUR GUESSTIMATE, AND WE WOULD EMPHASIZE IT IS ONLY THAT, IS THAT WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT MAJLIS ACTION MUCH BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. NEVERTHELESS WE DO NOT THINK THIS ACTION IS CRITICAL TO OUR PROCEEDING WITH TECHNICAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES SINCE WE HAVE INFORMAL ASSURANCES FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ABOUT THE STATUS OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION PERSONNEL WHICH WE FEEL PROVIDES ADEQUATED PROTECTION.

2. OF MORE FUNDAMENTAL CONCERN IS(A) THE STATUS OF OUR
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EFFORTS TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH THE GOI ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, AND(B) AGREEMENT OF SPECIFIC WORK PROGRAMS AND THEIR FUNDING. WITH RESPECT TO THE FORMER, A GOI DRAFT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE

CIRCULATED TO RELEVANT GOI MINISTRIES FOR COMMENT AND SUBSEQUENT SUBMISSION TO US FOR OUR REACTION. THIS DRAFT WAS TO HAVE BEEN THE PRODUCT OF NUMEROUS CONVERSATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE WE HAVE HAD WITH THE GOI, PRINCIPALLY WITH VAFA IN THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE. ALTHOUGH WE WERE PROMISED THIS DRAFT "IN THE NEAR FUTURE" ON JULY 9, WE HAVE YET TO RECEIVE ANY FURTHER WORD. IN THE MEANTIME VAFA HAS BEEN OFF ON A LONG VACATION (DUE TO RETURN ABOUT AUGUST 16) AND HIS DEPUTY DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING HELPFUL TO TELL US.

3. WITH RESPECT TO (B) WE AND VISITORS FROM WASHINGTON HAVE WORKED OUT AND PRESENTED VARIOUS SPECIFIC PROPOSALS IN THE FIELDS OF TRANSPORTATION, LABOR, AGRICULTURE, AND SCIENCE. WHILE WE HAVE BEEN PROMISED REPEATEDLY THAT WE COULD EXPECT A RESPONSE "SOON", NONE HAS BEEN FORTHCOMING. IN THE AREA OF TRANSPORTATION THIS MATTER HAS BECOME QUITE CRITICAL BECAUSE FHWA HAS APPARENTLY IN GOOD FAITH RECRUITED TECHNICAL EXPERTS WHO HAVE SOLD THEIR HOMES IN ANTICIPATION OF AN ASSIGNMENT HERE BUT WHO HAVE YET TO RECEIVE THE GO-AHEAD.

4. A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF THIS WE CAN SET DOWN TO BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA, INEFFICIENCY AND SUMMER HOLIDAYS, BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT WHAT MAY HAVE BECOME EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS THE QUESTION OF FINANCING. AS YOU KNOW FROM WHAT ANSARY TOLD YOU IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CONTEXT, THE GOI IS IN THE PROCESS OF REEVALUATING AND RETRENCHING EXPENDITURES UP AND DOWN THE LINE. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THIS HAS MEANT THAT AT A MINIMUM NO SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDS ARE BEING GIVEN TO GOI MINISTRIES FOR NEW PROGRAMS AND THEY MUST THEREFORE EITHER REALLOCATE WITHIN CURRENT BUDGETS FOR NEW PROGRAMS OR DO WITHOUT. WE KNOW, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IN THE TRANSPORTATION FIELD SEVERAL AMBITIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS HAVE NOW BEEN PUT BACK ON THE SHELF. IT WOULD SEEM PROBABLE THAT THIS

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WOULD INEVITABLY AFFECT THE TIMING AND NEED FOR TECHNICAL EXPERTS. WE SUSPECT THAT THE SAME MAY BE TRUE IN OTHER AREAS.

5. I PROVIDE THE FOREGOING IN VIEW OF YOUR IMMINENT MEETING WITH ANSARY AND SUGGEST THAT YOU TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GO OVER EACH OF THESE POINTS WITH HIM IN SOME DETAIL. IF LACK OF FINANCING IS IN FACT AT THE BOTTOM OF OUR INABILITY TO PROCEED IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THEN IT IS OBVIOUSLY IMPORTANT FOR US TO KNOW SO THAT WE CAN CANCEL OR DEFER RECRUITMENT PLANS. IF THIS IS NOT THE PROBLEM AND IT IS MORE A MATTER OF BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA, THEN I BELIEVE I MIGHT RAISE IT WITH THE SHAH

THE NEXT TIME I SEE HIM.

6. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTS AND A REPORT ON ANY
DISCUSSION YOU HAVE WITH ANSARY ON THIS.
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